



# ***ALERT***

**NUMBER 83**

**September/October 2009**

***ALERT**, a publication of the Information Resource Center at the American Center for Educational Exchange, offers abstracts of current articles in major areas of U.S. domestic or international affairs. Full-text articles are available to you upon request.*

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## **The Rule of Law**

### **1. AND DATA FOR ALL**

Thompson, Nicholas

Wired, vol. 17, no. 7, July 2009, pp. 68-71

Barack Obama is the first president to appoint a chief information officer for the federal government. Vivek Kundra, who comes to the office having served in a similar position for the District of Columbia, is planning Data.gov, a Web site where all government-produced information will be easy to find, sort and download. When that is done, according to Kundra, the private sector will find ways to use the data which will create new services for the public and new sources of profit for entrepreneurs. He points to the example of the Global Positioning System, which was once the exclusive property of the Department of Defense; now, the system is publicly available and is used for a variety of commercial and public service purposes. "The key is recognizing that we don't have a monopoly on good ideas," Kundra told Thompson in an interview. "And that the federal government doesn't have infinite resources." Currently available online at [http://www.wired.com/politics/onlinerights/magazine/17-07/mf\\_cio](http://www.wired.com/politics/onlinerights/magazine/17-07/mf_cio)

### **2. BRINGING ELECTIONS INTO THE 21st CENTURY: VOTER REGISTRATION MODERNIZATION**

Pew Center on the States

Web posted September 2009

America's current voter registration system is outdated, costly and inaccurate, according to the report. The report estimates that more than two million voters were unable to cast a ballot in the 2008 general election due to registration problems. It reviews the underperformance of the current voter registration system and recommends a 21st century, data-driven registration system.

Currently available online at

[http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Voter\\_Registration\\_Modernization\\_Brief\\_web.pdf](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Voter_Registration_Modernization_Brief_web.pdf)

### **3. CONGRESSIONAL FAVORABILITY AT 24-YEAR LOW**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

September 2, 2009

Americans are extremely displeased with Congress, and there are already some signs that this could take a toll on the Democrats in the 2010 midterm elections. Currently, 37% express a favorable opinion of Congress, while 52% hold an unfavorable view. Positive opinions of Congress have declined by 13 points since April and are now at one of their lowest points in more than two decades of Pew Research Center surveys. Currently available online at <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/539.pdf>

## **Economics and Trade**

### **4. CAPITALISM AFTER THE CRISIS**

Zingales, Luigi

National Affairs, No. 1, Fall 2009, pp. 22-35

Zingales, professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, writes that the nature of the financial crisis, and the government's response to it, threatens to undermine America's unique brand of capitalism, and move the country in the direction of state corporatism. Unlike

much of the rest of the West, democracy in America predates industrialization, so by the latter half of the nineteenth century, the American public had high expectations for fairness in economic policy; the concept of anti-trust law is a prime example. He notes that the pro-market aspects of American capitalism have been eclipsed by the pro-business forces, those that promote the interests of existing businesses. The financial sector's increasing concentration and political muscle, and the government bailouts for the major financial firms, threatens to start a vicious cycle. Zingales believes that the U.S. capitalism is at a crossroads. One path is to enact genuine reforms, even if they do not serve the interests of Wall Street, but he sees the current administration taking the other path, consisting of cosmetic measures like limits on executive bonuses, while shoring up the positions of the large financial firms, making the economy more dependent on government.

## **5. MINILATERALISM: THE MAGIC NUMBER TO GET REAL INTERNATIONAL ACTION**

Naím, Moisés

Foreign Policy, no. 137, July/August 2009, pp. 136-137

Not only globalization is falling out of favor in many countries but multilateralism is going through a crisis too, says the author, editor-in-chief of the magazine. The need for effective multicountry collaboration on such issues as climate change, nuclear proliferation and pandemics has soared, but related multilateral talks have failed or execution of agreed solutions has stalled. Naím proposes what he views as a smarter, more targeted approach: bringing to the table the smallest possible number of countries needed to have the largest possible impact on solving a particular problem. The magic number will vary greatly depending on the problem, but the author suggests that between a dozen and 20 countries should be able to effectively handle all important global problems. Countries not invited to such "minilateral" talks will denounce this approach as undemocratic and exclusionary, but Naím notes that agreements reached in smaller groups can provide the foundation on which more-inclusive deals can be subsequently built. Currently available online at <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/18/minilateralism>

## **6. A NEW CAPITALISM – OR A NEW WORLD?**

Schweickart, David

World Watch, vol. 22, no. 5, September-October 2009, pp. 12-19

Schweickart, philosophy professor at Loyola University Chicago, argues that "we must move beyond capitalism if humanity is to flourish" – capitalism, as currently practiced, depends on nonstop growth to remain healthy, and discounts the natural resources and ecological systems that it exploits. Schweickart proposes a system of democratized labor, in which businesses are communities, not legal entities that can be bought and sold, and democratized capital, in which financing is arranged through government taxation or public banks. He points to the Mondragon Corporacion Cooperativa in the Basque region of Spain, an enterprise already half a century old, as evidence that such an economy would be viable.

## **7. OVERLOOKED AND UNDERSERVED: THE CRISIS FACING AMERICA'S OLDER WORKERS**

Experience Works

September 2009

The study of more than 2,000 low-income unemployed workers age 55 and older, 46 percent need to find jobs so they don't lose their homes or apartments, and approximately half, 49 percent, have been looking for work for more than a year. In July 2009, there were two million

unemployed workers age 55 plus; the unemployment rate for this age group was the highest since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began tabulating data by age in 1948. Currently available online at [http://www.experienceworks.org/site/DocServer/EW-ExecSummary\\_09-Final.pdf?docID=10381](http://www.experienceworks.org/site/DocServer/EW-ExecSummary_09-Final.pdf?docID=10381)

## **8. RISING SENIOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE NEED TO WORK AT OLDER AGES**

Johnson, Richard W., Urban Institute  
September 28, 2009

Unemployment rates for older workers reached record levels in 2009, partly because fewer workers eligible for early retirement benefits are dropping out of the labor force. Growing concerns about the adequacy of retirement savings and whether retirees will have enough money to live comfortably in later life appear to have discouraged early retirement. Instead, more older workers are now remaining in the labor force and searching for work after they lose their jobs. The need for older adults to keep working raises the imperative for new policies that help address the special challenges that older job seekers face. Currently available online at [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411964\\_senior\\_unemployment.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411964_senior_unemployment.pdf)

## **9. TOWARD A FUTURE WITHOUT WANT**

Mousseau, Frederic  
World Policy Journal, vol. 26, no. 2, Summer 2009, pp. 73-81

With food riots, high food prices, increasing number of the world's hungry and declining food production in developing countries, the world has to change its agriculture and food policies drastically, says the author, a policy adviser for Oxfam Great Britain. He argues against strategies supported by many developed countries, such as genetically engineered crop varieties, a free-market approach to food production and distribution, and the World Bank's proposal to create a global food reserve. He writes that genetically modified crops have been largely irrelevant to most farmers in the developing world. Governmental support for and protection of farmers against market fluctuations, including floor prices for certain commodities, have in fact worked in Brazil and Indonesia. In his view, the food crisis should be addressed at the local, national and regional levels rather than through creation of a new global mechanism. Mousseau concludes that each nation must find the right combination of policies and interventions adapted to its specific context. Currently available online at <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/wopj.2009.26.2.73>

## **Global Issues / Environment**

## **10. THE BIG HEAT**

Powell, Corey  
Discover, June 2009, pp. 38-43

Global warming is at once the most alarming challenge and the most controversial. Despite the potential for catastrophic environmental outcomes, a large segment of the U.S. public still doubts that climate change will cause major harm, or that it is occurring at all. Discover Magazine editor-in-chief Powell moderates a discussion between four prominent climate scientists, who discuss the evidence that climate change is occurring. For them, the number of different events that are all happening simultaneously would be very hard to explain if not for global warming -- such as the loss of ice mass in both polar regions, the increasing acidification of the oceans, and the potential for widespread crop failures in many equatorial regions where crops are already being raised at temperatures close to their photosynthetic limits. They fear that it may be too late to make the

needed changes if humanity waits until there is international cooperation; what is needed is leadership by the U.S. and Europe, and other nations will follow. Currently available online at <http://discovermagazine.com/2009/jun/30-state-of-the-climate-and-science>

## **11. DAYDREAM BELIEVERS**

Rieder, Rem

American Journalism Review, August/September 2009

"America has become a country filled with people who stubbornly continue to believe what they want to believe, regardless of the facts," says Rieder, using as examples the persistence of people who refuse to believe Obama was born in the United States and those who believe that there are in fact provisions for "death panels" in health-care reform proposals. This situation makes it all the more critical for journalists to go beyond the "he-said, she-said" reporting of the past and not hesitate to reach firmly expressed conclusions -- with fairness, of course. Mainstream journalism has long been uncomfortable about making and expressing conclusions, but according to Rieder, "as long as that conclusion is based on carefully reported evidence, not ideology, there's no good reason not to do it." Currently available online at <http://ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4817>

## **12. FOREST PRIMEVAL**

Gugliotta, Guy

Smithsonian, vol. 40, no. 4, July 2009, pp. 14-16

Two abandoned coal mines in eastern Illinois contain the largest fossil forest ever discovered -- over four square miles of tropical wilderness preserved intact over 300 million years ago. This accident of nature occurred when an earthquake suddenly lowered the swamp, and sand and mud rushed in, covering everything. This site is so valuable to science because it provides a snapshot of life on Earth just prior to a period of great change, and most of the species found in the Riola and Vermilion Grove mines would later vanish. Researchers believe that the carbon-dioxide content of the atmosphere had suddenly grown; studying the relationship between this primordial atmospheric change and changes in vegetation may offer clues on how today's ecosystem could respond to increases in carbon-dioxide levels caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Currently available online at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Phenomena-Forest-Primeval.html>

## **13. THE LIMITS OF CONTROL**

Podger, Pamela

American Journalism Review, June/July 2009

For journalists today, social networking sites are increasingly blurring the line between the personal and professional. This creates a host of ethics and etiquette questions for news organizations, which are crafting guidelines for the growing number of staffers using social networks. Generally speaking, the advice to journalists is to identify themselves as journalists, tell recipients they are using social networks in a professional capacity, and remain mindful that people will regard them as representatives of their news organizations. Amy Webb, principal consultant at Webbmedia Group in Baltimore, says news organizations should be pondering the privacy and safety issues of a new crop of tools, including location-aware services. "When a New York Times reporter logs on to Facebook from his mobile phone, he's sharing a lot more information than his status updates. He's sharing the content he wrote and his location," Webb says. "There are safety and privacy issues around this." Currently available online at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4798>

#### **14. THE MOGULS' NEW CLOTHES**

Greenwald, Bruce; Knee, Jonathan; Seave, Ava  
Atlantic, October 2009

Even before the Internet upended their industry, big media companies were turning in poor performances and disappointing their shareholders. The four tenets of media industry wisdom -- growth, globalization, content and convergence -- are myths, these authors insist. Growth has actually resulted in lower stock performance, and globalization doesn't necessarily lead to higher profits. Creating superior content makes more money for the artists than for the media companies hosting their work. And finally, increased competition from multiple media sources and the Internet undercut the advantage traditional big media companies had of economies of scale and captive customers. The only real avenue to salvation that the traditional media industry has open is unglamorous: improving the efficiency of their operations. Currently available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200910/moguls>

#### **15. SMALL SIZE, BIG POTENTIAL**

Agoramoorthy, Govindasamy; Hsu, Minna  
Environment, vol. 50, no. 4, July/August 2008, pp. 22-35

Across the developing world, large numbers of major dams have been built, having been promoted as the best means of improving the supplies of fresh water. However, they have come at a great environmental and social cost; millions of acres of wilderness and arable land have been submerged, wildlife habitat has been destroyed and large numbers of people displaced. In this article, the authors study the small dams in drought-prone western India, concluding that smaller dams offer much more benefits with a much smaller environmental footprint. A network of smaller dams store as much water over a larger area than would a single large dam, the water supply can be managed more equitably, and can be controlled at the local community level, which is not possible with megadams.

#### **Regional Security**

#### **16. BOOM BOX USA: SURROGATE BROADCASTING AS A TOOL OF U.S. SOFT POWER**

Gedmin, Jeffrey  
Foreign Affairs, vol. 88, no. 5, September-October 2009

According to Gedmin, president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, U.S. government-sponsored surrogate broadcasting of accurate and reliable news remains the most effective and cost-efficient way to promote democracy and advance U.S. security interests in countries lacking independent media. The objective of surrogate broadcasting programs, such as Radio Farda in Iran, is not to overthrow a foreign government -- "when informed citizens are free to choose," Gedmin writes, "they invariably choose freedom over tyranny and prefer decent, accountable government to the arbitrary whims of authoritarian leaders." Surrogate broadcasting plays a role in Afghanistan, countering the Taliban's own information war, and in Russia, where public opinion toward the U.S. and toward democracy is ambivalent. Currently available online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65426/jeffrey-gedmin/boom-box-usa>



## **17. THE DEFAULT POWER**

Joffe, Josef

Foreign Affairs, vol. 88, no. 5, September-October 2009

According to Joffe, co-editor of *Die Zeit*, predicting the demise of U.S. global dominance has been an intellectual sport for 50 years. Yet he argues that still no other country comes close to the United States' economic or military heft. Joffe doubts that China will eclipse the United States as a world power any time soon. "Alas, global standing is not measured by the low prices of nontradable goods, such as haircuts, bootlegged software, and government services," he says. Export dependence hurts China both by risky reliance on foreign customers and risky denial of domestic welfare. Even if China avoids internal upheaval, Joffe says, it faces the problem of a rapidly aging population. He doubts that Europe will eclipse the United States -- Europe lacks the will to use armed force as required by a global power. And the United States, alone among contending powers, shows the enlightened self-interest that breeds foreign influence, he says.

## **18. EXPEDIENCY OF THE ANGELS**

Katzenstein, Suzanne; Snyder, Jack

National Interest, no. 100, March/April 2009, pp. 58-65

According to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs' Global Views 2008 survey, a plurality of U.S. public opinion has downgraded "promoting and defending human rights" from a "very important" to a "somewhat important" goal; a majority wants to "move cautiously," rather than either "aggressively" or "slowly" in promoting human rights abroad. The Obama administration will face human-rights issues at every turn in confronting terrorism, insurgency and ethnic cleansing, from South Asia to Sudan. To tackle these strategic challenges as well as chronic rights abuses, the new administration and nongovernmental advocacy groups need a new, more pragmatic approach. In the past, the strategies of neoconservatives and liberal activists have been long on the rhetoric of freedom and rights, but have fallen short on results. Wary of overpromising, the U.S. public has become skeptical about promoting American ideals abroad. Yet the real lesson of these setbacks should not be to abandon idealistic goals, but to pursue them in more pragmatic ways. Without developing a more effective human-rights policy, the United States will neither recover its tarnished reputation nor accomplish its strategic goals.

## **19. A GLOBAL PROBLEM: CYBERSPACE THREATS DEMAND AN INTERNATIONAL APPROACH**

Wilson, David (Maj.)

Armed Forces Journal International, July 2009

Cyberspace has changed the way people communicate forever, the author writes, but with that change comes a host of new problems including identity theft, computer viruses, the defacement of websites and network intrusions. He says cyberspace has become "an entity unto itself, not controlled by anyone, but affecting all in one form or another." Nations need to establish agreed-upon standards to help resolve problems plaguing cyberspace, including cybercrime. Wilson, who is chief of cyberlaw at the Army's U.S. Space and Missile Defense Command, advocates setting up an international organization comprised of cyber-faring nations to oversee the borderless domain of international cyberspace. Such an organization would promote collaboration by governments and industry on software and filtering standards needed to block viruses and create an international firewall. He also calls for the creation of an international cyberspace convention to monitor the health of cyberspace and to deal with problems. Within that context, the author says an international Computer Emergency Response Group must be created. Available online at <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2009/07/4062667/>



## **20. ISLAMISTS AND THE GRAVE BELL**

Gause, F. Gregory III

National Interest, September/October 2009

The author, professor of political science at the University of Vermont and currently visiting professor of international affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, writes that the recent elections in Lebanon and the events surrounding the elections in Iran have led many U.S. opinion-makers to argue once again that democracy in the Middle East will lead to the decline of Islamist regimes due to popular opposition. Gause notes that if most Arab countries had true democracy, Islamist parties would gain even more ground, in countries with authoritarian regimes that are U.S. allies. He believes that our interests are best served by promoting civil society in those countries whose leadership is resistant to change; the U.S. must walk a fine line between its desire to promote democracy, and its interests that are not always best served by pushing for elections in the Middle East. Currently available online at <http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=22036>

## **21. THE MAKING OF AN IRAN POLICY**

Cohen, Roger

New York Times Magazine, August 2, 2009, pp. 36-43

The author, a New York Times columnist just back from Tehran, discusses the Obama administration's struggle with what he considers its biggest diplomatic challenge. The Bush administration's ideologically driven "axis-of-evil" approach to Iran had failed; Tehran had prospered by expanding its regional influence and was accelerating its nuclear program. The Obama administration believed it was time to seek normalization through a new approach. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whose instincts on Iran have always been more hawkish than the president's, was pushing for a harder line, supported by Vice President Joe Biden; they did not prevail. The Obama administration's conviction is that Ahmadinejad's election was fraudulent, but in the American interest, it is ready to overlook that and to talk. The White House had been deliberately impartial on the election outcome by directing its diplomatic overture chiefly at Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader. In early May, Obama sent Khamenei a secret personal letter that proposed a framework for talks on the nuclear issue and regional security. The two things it had not planned for, however, were a situation of near-insurrection and Khamenei's shift into explicit alignment with Ahmadinejad. Currently available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/02/magazine/02Iran-t.html>

## **22. THE NPT: ACCESSING THE PAST, BUILDING THE FUTURE**

Dunn, Lewis A.

Nonproliferation Review, vol. 16, no. 2, July 2009, pp. 143-172

This article provides an analysis of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT) successes and failures to date. The author, who works as a senior vice-president for Science Applications International Corporation, also examines the prospects for the upcoming May 2010 NPT Review Conference. Ambassador Dunn suggests 15 possible steps to strengthen the treaty. He recommends pursuing three plans of action to establish a roadmap between the 2010 meeting and the next review conference in five years. The first plan would be organized around non-proliferation goals. Peaceful uses of nuclear energy would be the focus of the second plan. The last one would explore the broader ramifications of nuclear disarmament. Online link to PDF full text available at <http://cns.miis.edu/npr/162toc.htm>

### **23. THE PERILOUS CASE OF KIM JONG-IL**

Green, Michael J.

Interest, September/October 2009

The author, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and associate professor of international relations at Georgetown University, writes that, lost amid the arguments over the details of the negotiations with North Korea is the fact that Pyongyang has deliberately made itself more dangerous over the past fifteen years. This is complicated by the fact that Kim Jong-Il is dying, and the son whom he has likely picked as his successor will not have the legitimacy to keep the Communist Party and the military in line. Green believes that we are unlikely to see a peaceful collapse of the North Korean regime; more likely is that there will be three dangerous stages, the first of which we are experiencing now, which is the growing bellicosity of the military which is trying to maintain discipline and control. Next will be the challenge of containing nuclear or chemical arsenals, dealing with the North's million-man army, and a massive humanitarian crisis as the regime collapses, and finally the U.S. will have the delicate task of managing competing regional interests in stabilizing the peninsula. Currently available online at <http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=22030>

### **U.S. Society and Values**

### **24. THE LONG WAY HOME**

Theroux, Paul

Smithsonian, Vol. 40, No. 6, September 2009, pp. 70-77

Paul Theroux is one of the masters of travel writing, but he opens this article for Smithsonian admitting that he has never seen a great deal of his own country. He begins his cross-country road trip in Los Angeles, heading to his home in Cape Cod, Massachusetts with the plan that the journey is the destination. Along the way, he makes many of the iconic stops of the American road trip -- the Las Vegas strip, the Red Rocks of Arizona, the memorial to victims of the Oklahoma City terrorist attack, and the blues bars on Memphis' Beale Street. He finds barren deserts, ferocious weather, and pastoral scenes which he likens to similar places he has seen in distant countries. But at the end of his more than 5,400 kilometer journey, Theroux observes that he experienced "not a moment of alienation or danger, no roadblocks, no sign of officialdom, never a second of feeling I was somewhere different." Currently available online under the title "Taking the Great American Roadtrip" at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/The-Long-Way-Home-USA.html>

### **25. OUT OF THE KITCHEN, ONTO THE COUCH**

Pollan, Michael

New York Times Magazine, August 2, 2009, pp. 26-35, 44, 46-47

The author notes that the increasing popularity of cooking shows on television has coincided with a decrease in home cooking. The rise of cooking celebrities such as Julia Child, Alice Waters or Martha Stewart has been paralleled by the rise of fast food and home-meal replacements. The decline of home cooking has several causes -- women working outside the home; food companies persuading Americans to let them do the cooking; and advances in technology that made it easier for them to do so. Cooking is no longer obligatory, and for many people that has been a blessing. Ironically, the year Julia Child went on the air, 1963, was the same year Betty Friedan published *THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE*, the book that taught millions of American women to regard housework and cooking as drudgery. Julia Child, the author notes, never referred to her viewers

as “housewives” and never condescended to them; she tried to show that cooking, approached in the proper spirit, offered fulfillment and deserved attention.

**26. VALUE PROPOSITION**

Monan, J. Donald

Boston College Magazine, vol. 69, no. 3, Summer 2009, pp. 24-27

The author, former president of Boston College, addressed a group of higher education leaders at a Boston hotel on the purpose of a liberal arts education. From his perspective, Monan notes that liberal education has been weakened by a variety of factors, including the pressures for specialized skills in a mobilized society and, within the undergraduate college itself, the increasing specialization, departmentalization, and consequent isolation of faculty members and their offerings. Instead, American higher education should be directed almost exclusively at the intellects of students through the communication of truths, skills, habits and qualities of intellect. Liberal education should aspire, at its deepest level of intention, to educate for the enriching and constructive exercise of liberty. Currently available online at [http://bcm.bc.edu/issues/summer\\_2009/features/value-proposition.html](http://bcm.bc.edu/issues/summer_2009/features/value-proposition.html)

**27. THE WRITER’S EYE**

Frail, T.A.

Smithsonian, vol. 40, no. 1, April 2009, pp. 84-89

Eudora Welty, who was born 100 years ago, is one of the great figures in American literature; less well-known is that she was an avid amateur photographer before any of her written work was published. Her pictures, taken in Mississippi in the early-to-mid-1930s, show the rural poor and convey the worry of the Great Depression. Welty, notes the author, had a remarkable ability to put her subjects at ease, many of whom were African-American; her interest in photography and curiosity and empathy with her subjects inspired her future writings. Welty said that “photography taught me to be able to capture transience ... these were things a story writer needed to know.”